

Please DO NOT Cut FCC TRS / IP CTS Funding to InnoCaption

My name is Leni Gurin. For over 40 years I've served as a change management / organizational development consultant, leadership and team coach, and strategic advisor and facilitator for corporations, non-profits, government, and individual professional practitioners. I've directed departments and run my own business, led teams and been a team member / collaborator.

About a year and a half ago, I retired from a principal advisor role in a large management consulting company. Because of moderate to severe sensory-neuro hearing loss that started shortly before I took that job, at the end of seven years I could no longer effectively facilitate live organization / group meetings, nor participate in online professional development courses. I also regularly had to race back and forth between my office in Tysons' Corner, Virginia, my various DC metro-area client locations, and my home office just to use a landline CapTel phone for multiple weekly and daily audio-conference calls.

I eventually couldn't understand anyone on a cell call - despite the fact that my Bluetooth hearing aid streams calls directly from my cell. Once I even had to put my husband on the phone to talk to the 911 operator himself when he hit his own head in a fall - because I couldn't understand or respond to the 911 operator's questions over my cell.

Thankfully, around the same time I officially retired (the end of 2017), I was introduced to the InnoCaption cell-based captioning app at a meeting of the local Washington DC chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA).

What an amazing gift InnoCaption has been!! Using InnoCaption has enabled me to function so much better in my personal and ongoing professional life. For example, with InnoCaption I have been able to restart the coaching practice I had before I took my final corporate position. **I don't even want to imagine ever having to go back to the way things were before InnoCaption.**

Here are just a few of the many things I CAN now do because of InnoCaption, that would be devastating to have to give up because of potential FCC IPT CTS / TRS funding cuts. Having cellphone captions by live InnoCaption CAs ensure that I can:

- Fully and safely engage in a 911 emergency call if needed
- Make / follow / understand and respond to *any* cell phone calls for any and every reason
- Stay connected to family, friends, colleagues, business service providers, neighbors, etc.
- Engage in the day-do-day social relationships are essential in preventing the isolation and even potential dementia that deaf, deaf blind and hearing-impaired people are statistically more prone to
- Continue to provide professional leadership coaching services for paying and pro-bono clients using my captioned cellphone and/or a combination of cellphone audio (with captions) and Zoom or other web-based video conferencing
- Participate in online and phone professional development and education, and collaborative projects needing reliable accuracy, especially with technical language.

Finally, as part of a consulting team working on a 2015 FCC project to provide technical equivalency for TRS users who are deaf, deaf-blind, hearing or speech impaired, I personally came to a deeper and broader appreciation of the importance of continuing to support and improve both land-based and cell telephone captioning services so they are securely and reliably available to all Americans who need

them 24/7. At the same time, I do understand the need to reduce / eliminate potential and actual fraud and waste caused by the cheating of a few bad TRS service providers or CAs.

Cutting FCC funding for InnoCaption's TRS services and related technical innovation is *not* the answer.

With ever increasing demand, cutting reimbursement rates also doesn't make sense – it just disproportionately discourages the introduction of technical innovations / efficiencies by new or smaller TRS providers like InnoCaption. Better performance and improvement incentives and measurement, public and professional education, and provider / CA accountability *are* critical factors. Exploring different reimbursement formulas - not based just on call minutes – must also be part of any meaningful changes in the FCC TRS program. [Please DO NOT cut FCC TRS funding for InnoCaption!](#)